

Harald E.L. Prins
BATH
LD 2187

I am Harald E.L. Prins of North Bath, living on the west bank of the Kennebec tidal estuary below the Chops. Just upriver, the Androscoggin and four smaller rivers converge in Merrymeeting Bay, an ecologically rich area with extensive tidal marshes, migrating fish, and diverse bird populations.

Informed by river defenders such as KELT and Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, I strongly support LD 2187, with an amendment to upgrade the upper lower Androscoggin River—from Worumbo Dam to Gulf Island Pond Dam.

This effort points to an emerging concept of a river's "natural rights." In New Zealand, the Whanganui River is recognized by the Māori as a "living being" and was granted legal personhood nearly ten years ago. Two guardians—one appointed by the government, one by the local iwi—can represent the river in court if harmed. Maine might consider similar protections for the rivers we share with countless other creatures.

Please support this amendment to lock in the river's current Class B quality: both federal and state law forbid backsliding, and the law only works when classifications reflect reality.

In recognition of our timeless river's natural rights

Harald E. L. Prins, cultural anthropologist/ethnohistorian